

STATE OF VERMONT
Agency of Administration

STANDARD	ORIGINAL POLICY ADOPTED BY STC	ORIGINAL POLICY NUMBER
	DATE:	
	EFFECTIVE DATE 03/16/2017	ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS Policy for the naming of domains for Vermont state Web sites.

STATUTORY REFERENCE

OR OTHER AUTHORITY: Policy for Web Look and Feel Requirements

APPROVAL DATE:

APPROVED BY: **Chief Information Officer**

POLICY TITLE: **Domain Name Standards**

POLICY STATEMENT:

Introduction

These standards are designed to make State of Vermont Web sites more usable and familiar to the public. They are designed to create a rational system of naming that allows navigation to the correct site as simple as possible. They are further intended to promote Vermont.gov as an indicator of official state communications.

1 Types of First Level Domain Names

- 1.1 **.gov domains** - These domains must be requested through the CIO's office by federal mandate and are registered with the Office of Electronic Government and Technology (OEGT). A .gov domain is intended only for sites that provide official government content. This includes any site that provides information to the public, provides e-government services, or provides access to state resources. These domains cannot be used for any function that promotes a commercial activity, even indirectly. The State of Vermont has authority over the vermont.gov second level domain and may create additional third level domains at will.
- 1.2 **state.vt.us domains** – These domains are being phased out because of a change in the rule concerning who can register them. These domains continue to be used in legacy applications, usually to allow communication between various state systems. These domains should not be used for public facing Websites.
- 1.3 **Other domains** - These include .com, .org, .net, .us and .info. These top-level domains are intended for particular purposes but are not restricted in any way. This means that anyone can register these domain names. The use of these domains by Vermont departments and agencies is spelled out in this document.

2 The Forming of Domain Names

- 2.1 Domain names are intended to be memorable and easily guessed to allow users to locate information on the internet easily. The ideal domain name is short and specific.
- 2.2 When creating a domain name, examine your first ideas and see if the name you have chosen has the potential to cause confusion. An example of a confusing domain would be "inspections.vermont.gov." There would also tend to be the greatest contention about what state entity should rightfully possess this domain.
- 2.3 Words with multiple meanings should also be avoided in domain names. A domain like "media.vermont.gov" could refer to tv, radio and newspapers or film, video tape and CDs or paint, clay and ink, etc. Domain names should be clear such as: newsoutlets.vermont.gov, videoaudiostorage.vermont.gov or artmaterials.vermont.gov.

3 Approval Process

- 3.1 Any domain name that a state entity wishes to use must be approved by the CIO's office.
 - 3.1.1 Further approval of a second level .gov domain name must be received from the federal level via OEGT. A second level domain can take weeks or months to acquire and is not at the sole discretion of the CIO's Office.
- 3.2 A request for approval for domain names shall be submitted as a ticket to the IT Service Desk. The ticket must include the domain name requested and a description of the purpose of the proposed site. Requests for any domain other than a third level vermont.gov domain shall also include a business case for using a non-standard domain. If an existing site is being renamed, then a link to the existing site should be included.
- 3.3 Once received, the name will be appraised for conformity to this standard. The office of the CIO will make every effort to approve names that meet this standard within 10 business days from the time of initial request.

- 3.4 If the domain does not meet state naming standards, then the CIO's staff will work with the requestor to develop a suitable name that meets the standard. Once agreement is reached, the process will move forward as above.

4 Cost

- 4.1 The cost of registering a second level .gov domain name with OEGT will be borne by the entity requesting the new domain name.
- 4.2 New third level, vermont.gov, domain names do not entail additional cost.
- 4.3 Non .gov domains will be purchased at their market price and the cost borne by the requesting entity.

5 State Websites

5.1 Department and Agency Web Sites

- 5.1.1 The main website for every department and agency must be registered in the .gov domain. The standard naming convention for such sites will be "AGENCY.vermont.gov" Some Examples might be:

treasury.vermont.gov
corrections.vermont.gov
health.vermont.gov
labor.vermont.gov

- 5.1.2 Program specific sites may also take the .gov domain extension. These sites may take a domain in the form "PROGRAM.vermont.gov" For example:

envision.vermont.gov
ladiesfirst.vermont.gov

- 5.1.3 Board and council sites may also take the .gov domain extension. These sites may take a domain in the form "BOARD.vermont.gov." For example:

psb.vermont.gov
gmcboard.vermont.gov

- 5.2 The .gov domain will be the standard for all state websites. Other domains will only be considered if there is a compelling reason to use an alternate domain.

- 5.3 All state .gov domains will be created with the following variations:

XXXXX.vermont.gov
www.XXXXX.vermont.gov
XXXXX.vt.gov
www.XXXXX.vt.gov

5.4 Sites with a Commercial Purpose

- 5.4.1 Sites which have a commercial purpose, even sites that contain a simple directory of businesses, are not eligible for any sub-domain under the .gov domain. Sites registered as a .gov that engage in this type of activity may have the domain revoked if the activity is discovered by OEGT. Official Vermont sites that engage in the promotion of business must therefore register under a different domain. The standard domain for such a site would be the .com domain.

5.5 High Profile and Marketing Sites

- 5.5.1 Certain state sites serve a business function for the state. Because these sites and the business functions they serve depend on users easily finding the right web page it is best to use the most common internet domain, .com. Sites such as these must have a compelling reason to use the .com domain. The domain must be provided to DII for approval using the same approval process as sites in the .gov domain.

5.6 Other Generic Domains

- 5.6.1 The .org, .net and .info domains are specifically intended for certain types of web site. The .org domain, while not specifically restricted, is intended only for non-profit groups. The .net domain is used by Internet infrastructure and service providers. The .info domain was created to augment the .com domain because so few meaningful names remain available. None of these names will be used as domains for state Internet sites.

5.7 Aliases and Redirects

- 5.7.1 Domains that are to be used for aliasing a set of web pages or as a redirect page will be subject to the standard approval process.

6 **Contacting DII**

- 6.1 Anyone requesting a new domain name shall submit a service ticket to the Web Services Group at least 10 business days before it is intended to be used. This will allow time to correct a request if it does not meet the standards in this document. Exceptions will be made for emergent situations on a case by case basis.
 - 6.1.1 Second level .gov domains will require several weeks or months to process as these require secondary approval at the federal level. Such domains should be requested at least 2 months before they are intended to be used.